

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 885

By Eldridge

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Ms. Dianne Odell on the celebration of her 61st birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pay tribute to those sterling citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Dianne Odell celebrated her 61st birthday on February 13, 2008, a milestone that was commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, Dianne Odell's birthday is especially significant, because she has the distinction of being the nation's longest living polio survivor in an iron lung; and

WHEREAS, the daughter of Freeman and Geneva Odell, Ms. Odell was born and raised in Jackson, Tennessee, where she is a highly revered member of the community; and

WHEREAS, when she was just three years of age, Ms. Odell contracted respiratory-paralyzing bulbar polio, and she was placed in an iron lung to help her breathe; and

WHEREAS, Dianne Odell credits her faith in God, her family, and her friends for giving her the courage to face whatever obstacles have come her way; and

WHEREAS, her parents raised her with the belief that she was capable of doing anything, and Ms. Odell enjoyed a childhood of slumber parties at home and listening to the Beatles, particularly their song, *The Yellow Submarine*; and

WHEREAS, at the age of thirteen, Dianne Odell embraced Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior, and she was baptized, later stating claiming that she had never felt such a feeling of joy and being born again; and

WHEREAS, with the help of homebound teachers, Ms. Odell graduated with honors from Jackson City Schools in 1965, and later placed first in a nationwide essay contest titled, *Why I Want to Go to College*, winning a \$5000 scholarship; and

WHEREAS, Dianne Odell first attended Freed-Hardeman College in 1969, and graduated on May 10, 1987, from the school with an honorary doctorate in psychology; she spoke eloquently at her graduation and received a standing ovation for her inspiring efforts; and

WHEREAS, throughout her adulthood, Ms. Odell has continued to lead a productive life; she has tutored children in math and reading, worked as an answering service for a local business, authored a children's book titled, *Blinky Less Light*, and penned a song, *Santa's Just Too Busy*, with songwriter Alex Harvey, which qualified her for acceptance into the Nashville Songwriters Association. In addition, she realized a long-held dream when she sang *I'll Be Home for Christmas* onstage with Gary Morris at a 2004 gala held in her honor; and

WHEREAS, as she continues into her seventh decade, Dianne Odell is still a valuable member of society, participating in various activities, such as conversing with several celebrities and being featured on more than 600 web sites; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Odell's indomitable spirit and awe-inspiring strength and courage in the face of incredible adversity have garnered her national recognition from celebrities that include actress Jane Seymour, movie producer James Keach, Grammy winner Gary Morris, actor David Keith, entertainer Stella Parton, Dallas Cowboys star Cliff Harris, Laurice Lanier, and many others who she counts among her many friends; and

WHEREAS, her amazing commitment to living the examined life with conviction despite its many obstacles had led her to being featured in *Women's World* magazine and on radio commentator Paul Harvey's *And Now, the Rest of the Story* show; and

WHEREAS, Dianne Odell is most appreciative of the love and support she receives from her family, which in addition to her parents, include her sisters, Donna and Mary; she humbly credits her family, her countless friends, and her stalwart faith, for helping her through life; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Dianne Odell is truly an extraordinary individual who encourages all of us to better ourselves by her continuing efforts to piece together the enduring fabrics that comprise the grand tapestry of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Ms. Dianne Odell on the celebration of her 61st birthday and extend to her our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.